

off firefighters. In Lorain, 33 percent of the time, fire station No. 4 is closed. But even with these frequent closures, they still put their lives on the line. They risk their lives without hesitation. Lorain firefighters Shawn Lloyd and Dan Russell were injured as they pulled a 6-year-old girl from a fire. Four firefighters from Elyria saved the 56-year old life of Russell Bowles, who wasn't breathing and had no heartbeat. They used a defibrillator to bring him back to life and then rushed him to the hospital.

In August, an Elyria Township firefighter was injured by a gas tank explosion as he was responding to a house fire. In Akron, fire captains Albert Bragg and Charles Twigg arrived at a house fire and were told someone was still in the home. Without hesitation, they ran into the house. They found the man and they carried him to safety. And when a man in Brunswick was experiencing a type of cardiac arrest known as the "widow maker" because it almost always results in death, it was firefighter Russ Merhaut and his fellow team members who arrived on the scene and resuscitated him.

First responders not only keep us safe, they also actively support our communities. This year, Barberton police officers and firefighters helped raise about \$1,800 for the Youth in Action fund during the Police versus Fire Olympics. In Strongsville, the fire department plays an active role in Safety Town, which is a fire safety program that teaches children about fire safety and prevention.

We can sleep soundly at night knowing that these men and women are here to serve and protect us. But all too often, their service comes at a costly price. Each year, approximately 80,000 of our Nation's firefighters are injured. And last year, 103 firefighters were killed. Those who have made the ultimate sacrifice put their community and their neighbors above their own lives. And even though our departed firefighters are no longer with us, the lessons they taught us will last forever. Their noble and unrelenting allegiance to public service embodies the American spirit, and I cannot imagine better role models.

For these reasons, our Nation's firefighters and first responders deserve our continued praise and support. H. Res. 731 expresses our great appreciation for these great men and women. However, true support should come in the form of job stability. Protecting the jobs of our first responders is a top priority in ensuring the safety of all communities.

I was very pleased that language included in the supplemental appropriations bill this year expanded the use of the SAFER grants to allow communities to retain and rehire firefighters. Communities in my district are looking forward to applying for those grants that they so desperately need.

Given the economic hardships currently facing our country, these grants

are critically important to the wellbeing of our firefighters and communities. Far too many communities have had to lay off firefighters. And as we all know, these fire department closures cause response times to be longer. This can be risky for emergency callers as well as for our firefighters because a working fire has more time to grow and become more dangerous.

Lorain firefighters need these SAFER grants, and Fire Chief Tom Brown is ready and waiting to apply for them. Elyria firefighters need these SAFER grants, and Elyria Fire Chief Rich Benton is ready and waiting to apply for them. In Akron, 38 firefighters have been laid off. Our firefighters are people with mortgages and young children. Akron firefighters need these SAFER grants, and Fire Chief Larry Bunner is ready and waiting to apply for them.

Competition for the estimated \$630 million for the entire country will be intense. In 2008, 72 firefighters protected the city of Elyria, but today only 46 are tasked with the duty. And our union presidents like Dean Marks and Jon George are working hard to preserve jobs and the safety of their communities. The IAFF and the OAPF are working hard to protect the jobs of these brave men and women.

Our Nation's first responders can never be thanked enough for their efforts. Through this resolution, we recognize their brave work, and it does not go unnoticed. We salute the sacrifices and commitment to our State and local government officials for their efforts to keep our communities safe and deter acts of terrorism. Let's get those SAFER grants out.

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CZARS NEED TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE SENATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, the reason I rise tonight is to follow up on my good friend Mr. POE of Texas. He was talking about 45 czars being appointed by the President to run this government in large part. The thing that bothers me about that and what Mr. POE said is that these people do not have to go through the normal process of confirmation in the Senate.

The reason we have that process of advice and consent of the Senate is to make sure that the people that are being appointed are not only capable of doing the job, but they don't have anything in their closets that is going to cause disrepute, disrespect, or anything on the administration. But the administration continues to appoint these people as czars in large part, I believe, because he doesn't want the American people to know their backgrounds.

We've had people that have been appointed who are admitted Communists, people who have been appointed who have been involved in supporting nefarious activities and deviant kinds of activities, and it just seems to me that the American people need to know those things. But unfortunately, the administration continues to appoint these czars because they know they do not have to go through the confirmation process. I think that's just wrong.

So, if I were talking to the President, I think if the American people were talking to the President tonight, as would Mr. POE, my good friend from Texas, would like to say, Hey, let's have these people unveiled. Let's find out what they're all about before they take on positions of responsibility, positions that spend taxpayers' money and make decisions on how this government is run. We need to know what kind of people they are. We need to know their backgrounds.

So I would just like to say, if I were talking to the President on behalf of the American people, Let's go through the regular process, Mr. President, just like you do with Cabinet appointees. Make sure that there is a background check done on them by the FBI so we know what they're about. Let's make sure they go through the confirmation process, through the Senate, through the committee system and are voted upon by the United States Senate so that they are confirmed. And if we do that, we'll know that they're competent people, honorable people who will do the job for the American people and not people that we're going to be embarrassed by later on.

IN AFGHANISTAN, "EIGHT IS ENOUGH" TO PROVE THERE'S NO MILITARY SOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, today is the eighth anniversary of American involvement in Afghanistan. America will soon be at war in Afghanistan longer than we were in World War I, World War II, and the Korean War combined.

For 8 long years we've been trying to find a military solution in Afghanistan, but we have not succeeded. Hundreds of billions of dollars have been spent, and over 850 of our brave troops have died, but the insurgency continues to grow. Now President Obama is being urged to double down on the military option. Some people believe that all we need to do is send in 40,000 more troops, and then we can roll out the "mission accomplished" sign. But the last 8 years of fighting, Madam Speaker, have proven beyond doubt that there is no military solution to Afghanistan, and escalating the war now will only make things worse, not better.

A study done by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace found

that “the presence of foreign troops is the most important element driving the resurgence of the Taliban.” That’s why I have joined with 56 of my colleagues in the House on both sides of the aisle to send a letter to President Obama urging him to reject calls to increase the number of combat troops in Afghanistan. But I’m not urging the President to walk away from Afghanistan; far from it.

America needs to stay involved, but we need a winning strategy, and that means understanding the plight of the Afghan people and what they need so that they can reject the Taliban and violent extremism. They desperately need food, education, economic development, agricultural enrichment, better infrastructure, protection from disease, and a government that they can trust.

Afghanistan is easy pickings for violent extremists because it’s virtually the poorest nation on Earth, and without assistance from the outside world, the Afghan people have little hope for a better future. The United Nations issues its annual Human Development Index on Monday, and it ranks the countries of the world on criteria such as life expectancy, literacy, school enrollment, and gross domestic product. Out of 182 countries, Afghanistan ranks 181, next to last.

That’s why, Madam Speaker, the United States must break from the military-only approach that hasn’t worked for the past 8 years and change our mission to emphasize development, reconstruction, humanitarian aid, and civil affairs. NGOs and military forces can be directed to support these efforts. That would improve the lives of the Afghan people, and it would achieve the crucial goal of removing the impression that America is an occupying country.

We must also step up our diplomatic efforts. We’ve got to do a better job of engaging all the Nations in the region that have an interest in stabilizing Afghanistan. President Obama himself has recognized that military power alone is not the answer to our problems. In his inaugural address, he said that—and I quote him—“Our power alone cannot protect us, nor does it entitle us to do as we please . . . Our power grows through its prudent use (and) our security emanates from the justness of our cause, the force of our example, and the tempering qualities of humility and restraint.”

President Obama is right to believe that America does best when we demonstrate our commitment to peace, to democracy, to human rights and progress.

Madam Speaker, I urge the President to remember his words and use them to guide his decisions about Afghanistan in the coming days. If he does, he will take important steps toward defeating violent extremism and making America and the world safer.

HONDURAS’ UPCOMING ELECTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to express my strong support for the upcoming November elections in Honduras and to underscore my ongoing concern with the current U.S. policy toward this Central American nation and its people.

I have just returned from Honduras, where I had the opportunity to see with my own eyes what is happening on the ground there. Let me tell you, Madam Speaker, it’s very quiet on the streets of Tegucigalpa. Despite the efforts of the pro-Zelaya camp to create the impression that chaos is reigning in Honduras, there are no tires burning in the streets, there are no massive protests urging Manuel Zelaya’s return, no collapse of democratic order or institutions.

I met with officials of the constitutional, democratic Government of Honduras. I met with Honduran civil society. I met with their religious leaders. I met with the Honduran press. I even had the opportunity to meet with some of our fellow Americans who are living in Honduras now. And through it all, there was a very consistent and a very clear message. That is: The Honduran people are committed to the defense and the protection of their democracy, of their constitution, of the rule of law.

The people of Honduras do not want Manuel Zelaya back in office. The Honduran people do not want outside actors infringing upon and determining their democracy and their rule of law. For the Honduran people, the November 29 elections are the solution, they are the way forward, and I couldn’t agree with them more.

I introduced House Resolution 749. What does it do? It calls on Secretary Clinton to support the efforts of the appropriate authorities in Honduras to ensure that the November elections are free, are fair, are now transparent.

It calls on President Obama to recognize these elections as an important step in the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law in Honduras. No matter how one views the events of June 28, it is critical that the implementation and the recognition of the validity of the November 29 Honduran elections remains separate and independent from the current political fray.

The date of the elections, the presidential candidates, and the presidential term were determined long before Zelaya’s removal, and nothing has changed since then. Again, the Honduran electoral process is continuing in accordance with the Honduran Constitution.

The U.S. has historically recognized free, fair, and transparent elections as a fundamental component of a democracy. So why now is the U.S. so quick to admonish what appears to be the only viable way forward for a peaceful

resolution in Honduras? How could the U.S. help to open the door to the Cuban tyranny to rejoin the Organization of American States but yet push for Honduras’ expulsion because the Honduran people defended their constitution and their democracy? How could the U.S. directly engage with Ahmadinejad, let him into the United States to address the General Assembly at the United Nations yet revoke the visas of the constitutionally democratic constituted representatives of the Honduran Government? These are all questions that I have been asking officials in this administration and have been asked time and time again.

Madam Speaker, I’m concerned that if we in the U.S. continue along this misguided path and continue to impose this misguided Zelaya-centric policy, that the goodwill and the respect and the admiration that the U.S. currently enjoys in Honduras will now start to dissipate. We can’t afford for that to happen. The United States has always been the beacon of democracy. How can we take this undemocratic way forward for Honduras?

I’m deeply concerned about the impact that this action will have on our U.S. security interests as well, Madam Speaker. After all of my meetings and briefings and during my visit in Honduras, I’m more concerned and more convinced than ever that the current U.S. approach is severely undermining our immediate security interests in Honduras—in fact, in Central America as a whole—and it will significantly impact and have detrimental long-term ramifications for the stability and the security of our hemisphere.

But there is still time to reconsider. There is still time to correct our wrongs and find a way forward, and that can begin with the U.S. Government publicly announcing that it will respect the sovereignty of the free Honduran people and respect what it says in the Honduran Constitution, that the U.S. will support the will of the Honduran people and recognize free, fair, transparent elections in Honduras this November. The future and the will of the Honduran people are far too important to let Manuel Zelaya or his puppets run the show any longer.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

BATTLING BREAST CANCER THROUGH HEALTH CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I would like to offer my sincere thanks